

**Testimony of Senator Judith T. Won Pat, Minority Leader - 29th Guam
Legislature before the House Natural Resources Committee,
Subcommittee on Insular Affairs**

August 13, 2007

A warm Hafa Adai to the Honorable Chairwoman Donna Christensen and members of the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, my name is Judith T. Won Pat senator and minority leader. I am speaking today on behalf of the minority senators of the 29th Guam Legislature, Senators Rory J. Respicio, Vicente "Ben" Pangelinan, Adolpho Palacios, Tina Muna-Barnes, Dr. David Shimizu, and Dr. Judith P. Guthertz.

Thank you for the invitation to testify in today's oversight field hearing on the "U.S. Military Buildup on Guam and the Challenges Facing the Community." I commend Chairwoman Christensen for holding this hearing on Guam and I hope this will be the first of many congressional oversight field hearings that will be conducted on Guam which will allow the civilian community to voice their opinions about the military buildup.

Before I begin to speak on the impact of the relocation of marine from Okinawa to Guam, I would be remiss if I fail to address two issues of paramount importance to the people of Guam that has yet to be resolved; that of political status, and war reparations. I won't belabor the issue but just to say that on political status, there is a need for Congress to support the local effort for Chamorros to finally determine their own political destiny.

On the issue of war reparations, we are elated that the World War II Loyalty Recognition Act has made it to the U.S. Senate for their consideration. To reiterate the findings of the Guam War Claims Review Commission established by Congress, the Commission found that; the U.S. has a moral obligation to pay proper compensation for war damages, that there is a lack of parity in war claims for Guam when compared to other war claims programs established by the U.S. Congress, and that Guam was erroneously excluded from coverage under Title II of the War Claims Act. With continued persistence and

hard work on this issue, we hope to finally close this dark chapter in Guam's history

Our island, in the coming decade, will see a significant increase in our military and overall population with the arrival of Marines from Okinawa and their families. Not since the end of World War II has Guam experienced such a dramatic increase in military personnel. But unlike the post WWII buildup on Guam, we are in a much better and able condition to be active participants in the coming buildup. We envision a process in which the local government can be joint partners and where civilian community input will be taken not only into consideration, but be an integral part in the eventual decisions made.

I do not oppose the military buildup or the movement of marines from Okinawa. My adamant objection is to the way that Guam has been treated so far in this very important, significant, and far reaching military buildup planning process. Why are the people that stands to be affected the most by this buildup are left out of the decision making process?

To this day, we have been given little or no information as to the allocation of the billions of dollars that have been committed to the buildup on Guam. A discussion of socio-economic implications of the move and the possible immediate, latent, and residual impact on the quality of life on Guam has not even been discussed. Clearly Guam's social, cultural and environmental resources will be impacted by decisions made by the military, and it should be recognized that there exist an obligation by the military to provide as much information and resources to the island to allow Guam leaders an opportunity to prepare and plan in anticipation of the military buildup. My hope is that this hearing will convey to Congress the frustration and anxiousness that their fellow Americans on Guam feel about the coming military buildup and to recognize the need to include Guam and their leaders in the full scope of any discussion regarding the buildup.

There are four main topics that I wanted to cover in my testimony. They are infrastructure, economic impact, social impact, and education.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Guam, with a population of about 170,000 people, is barely able to provide the necessary infrastructure to meet the requirements of the community. Our water and power systems are at near capacity; our roads are in need of repair; there is an immediate need to close Ordot dump and to open a new sanitary landfill, and our only civilian hospital has been struggling to meet the needs of the current population. Imagine the impact of additional military personnel and support staff and their families totaling 30,000 people on our ailing infrastructure. A growth of 30,000 may just be the beginning. In addition, imported labor will be needed to complete construction projects, job seekers from the Freely Associated States by virtue of the Compact will no doubt want to come to Guam to seek employments, independent contractors from the mainland, and other entrepreneurs looking for a quick buck. In the final analysis we may see a population growth of up to 50,000 people. How will Guam deal with this explosive growth with an already overburdened infrastructure?

In the coming years, the landfill at Andersen Air Force base will have reached its capacity and will have to be shut down. The landfill, run by the Navy, is also reaching capacity and has been rumored to be contaminated and toxic. So far we have not seen any plans by the military on what their intentions are after they close their landfills. With the influx of marines in the coming years, it will only hasten the closures of these landfills.

The hospital is another concern. A real measure of how well we can provide for our sick and disabled population is the ratio of hospital beds per 1,000 population. Our only civilian hospital the Guam Memorial Hospital currently has a 208 bed capacity, meaning that the ration on Guam is 1.2. The U.S. National average is 2.8 beds per 1000 population. The potential population boom in the next decade by the military buildup would eventual drop that ration to less than 1 bed per 1,000 persons.

In the U.S. Pacific Command's Pacific Fleet FY08 budget, there is a request under the quality of service category for 45 million dollars for a new fitness center. While we applaud such a request for military personnel, we have to recognize that this request only benefits those inside the fence. That same 45 million dollars invested in our local

hospital would not only help GMH come up to par with national standards but would also allow them to better serve the local and military community.

Any improvement to the infrastructure by the government of Guam benefits the entire island community. Can we say with certainty that the improvement made by the military on Guam will benefit both the military and the island community? Without any information from the military, we cannot plan properly for the buildup.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

While the potential economic gain as a result of the increase in defense personnel and spending are welcomed, we also need to examine the potential economic imbalance created by the huge increase in the population.

Military personnel stationed on Guam currently receive overseas housing allowances ranging from \$1,200 to \$5,000 and more depending on their rank and marital status. This is much higher than the housing budgets of most residents locally. If even only a small fraction of the military personnel take advantage of these allowances, the cost of rental units on Guam will skyrocket, effectively increasing costs for Guam residents and pricing them out of the local rental market.

Runaway inflation and an increase in the cost of living will become a problem for current residents of Guam. Already we have seen prices of utilities, healthcare, and fuel increase at an alarming rate with no relief in sight. With the increase of military personnel to the island, who for the most part are well compensated, this imbalance will only serve to increase the cost of living on island, create a situation of uncontrolled inflation, and further widen the gap between the rich and the poor. This will mean increasing the amounts of money the government will have to spend on welfare programs.

Current shortage of teachers, doctors, nurses, laborers, will be compounded by a 20% overnight growth in population. No community in the United States has ever faced such an unprecedented growth. Such unprecedented occurrence should be met with unprecedented assistance from the Federal Government and the U.S. Military.

SOCIAL IMPACT

The social impact of 30,000 new people on the island needs to be studied. There has been little research about the social impacts on the local populations and their responses to them. Gender issues for example need to be examined. How does the military buildup affect rates of prostitution, rape, and other violence against women, as well as the participation of women in the workforce and corresponding wage rates? A study, along the lines conducted by the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University, needs to be undertaken with a direct focus on the movement of military personnel, their families and other support staff and their immediate social impacts on the current population on Guam.

In a joint press conference with Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Japanese Defense Minister Yoshinori Ono in 2005, Rumsfeld stated that the move was "designed to enhance the alliance's capability to meet new threats and diverse contingencies and, as a whole, will **reduce** burdens on local communities..." What about the burden that is to be transferred to communities here on Guam, which Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has clearly pointed out?

EDUCATION

The military needs to end the practice of education segregation on our island. Allowing DODEA to continue running a separate school system perpetuates the notion that somehow the local system is not good enough for the military community. It encourages animosity between military and civilian families and further confirms the existence of two communities, living on one island, under the American flag, separated by a fence. While I concede that our education system is less than perfect, this should never be used as a reason to segregate an American community. This backwards policy flies in the face of the good works done by great Americans such as Martin Luther King, and Presidents Kennedy and Johnson who fought for equality in education for all regardless of their race, religion or creed. The millions of dollars spent on the Guam DODEA schools should be instead used to bolster the local educational system and help us turn it around so it can benefit all the children on Guam, civilian and military.

The existence of DODEA schools also exacerbates an existing problem with shortage of teachers on Guam. Often, the teachers that are employed at the DODEA schools come from the same pool of teachers that GPSS depends on to teach at our local schools. It has even come to the point that DODEA is hiring away teachers from GPSS. We can't blame the teachers for leaving GPSS, often the choice to teach at DODEA is one of economics. There is no way that the local government can compete with the resources of the U.S. military, and it should not be allowed to compete with the community.

When the military population increases, more of our teachers at our public schools will migrate to fill the needs at the DODEA schools. Where will that leave our public schools? Congress should be made aware of this situation and make the necessary policy changes to assist all of its citizens and not just those inside the gate.

There have been many discussions about Guam being the "Tip of the Spear" and that Guam is of the highest strategic value and of great importance to the mission of the United States in regional security and national defense. There is no doubt that there will be numerous debates and discussion both in Congress and in the Pentagon which will affect Guam and for which our people need a voice. As a U.S. Territory so far removed from the mainland, often times our issues and concerns fall on deaf ears. This is why this oversight hearing on Guam means so much to the future of our island. It will be decisions made in Washington D.C., in part through input from this subcommittee that will determine the direction of Guam for decades to come. All we want is to be part of that decision making process and ensure that any negative or positive impact on Guam resulting from the buildup be shared and the burden carried by all that call Guam home.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase and thank you!